

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

10/041,933

Examiner

Srirama Channavajjala

Applicant(s)

BATES ET AL.

Art Unit

2164

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 4/4/05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-2,4-30 [re-numbered as: 1-29].
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 07 January 2002 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some\*    c) ☐ None    of the:
    1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
  6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS ( as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
    - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review ( PTO-948) attached
      - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)            |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),<br>Paper No./Mail Date _____. |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),<br>Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment                    |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit<br>of Biological Material          | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance   |
|   | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____.   |

### **DETAILED ACTION**

1. Claims 1,4-6,8,11,18,25 have been amended [3/1/2005]
2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 3/1/2005 has been entered.
3. Examiner acknowledges applicant's response to previous office action on 8/20/2004.

### ***Drawings***

4. The drawings filed on 1/7/2002 are **accepted** for examination purpose only.

### ***Information Disclosure Statement***

5. The information disclosure statement filed on 1/7/2002, paper no. # 2 has been considered, a copy of PTO-1449 enclosed with this office action, paper no. # 3.

***EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT***

6. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Pursuant to MPEP 606.01 the **Title** is changed to read:

**-- A GROUP BASED SEARCH ENGINE GENERATING SEARCH RESULTS  
RANKING BASED ON AT LEAST ONE NOMINATION PREVIOUSLY MADE BY  
MEMBER OF THE USER GROUP WHERE NOMINATION SYSTEM IS  
INDEPENDENT FROM VISITATION SYSTEM --**

***Allowable Subject Matter***

**Reasons for indicating allowable subject matter**

The present application has been thoroughly reviewed, upon searching a variety of databases, the examiner submits that Claims 1-2,4-30 are allowable in light of the applicant's arguments at page 9-10, and in light of the prior art made of record.

The present invention is directed to group-based search engine for generating list of search results ranking, where ranking is based on at least one nomination previously made by a member of the user group [see Abstract, page 2-3], The system also collects visitation data from the group members regarding commonly or recently visited web pages, and presents that data back to members when they perform searches [see page 6]

The closest prior art Hansen et al. US Pub. No. 2003/0014399, is directed to organizing records of database search activity by topical relevance, more specifically, monitoring user search activity, extracting search sessions, defined by search queries and paths, from user search activity, determining groups of semantically related queries or paths based on search session data, search session including off-line processing of proxy server access logs to determine search sessions [page 2, 0026-0027], further, it is noted that proxy servers record the URLs of the items requested by their users, and proxy server also handles all the request made by a user community and hence records information about user behaviors [see page 5, 0048].

Nguyen et al. US Patent No. 6721729 is directed to electronic file search and collection, more specifically, receiving search concepts from user, search databases for documents, further user with visual display arranging the first plurality of search concepts in a matrix form i.e. flexible search using graphical user interface for entering a user-specified matrix of both pre-defined and user-defined search concepts [see col 3, line 66-67, col 4, line 1-9, line 55-65].

However, Hansen et al., Nguyen et al., either singularly or in combination, fail to anticipate or render obvious the recited feature “a visitation system for *“visiting a search result generated by the search system; and a nomination system for nominating a web page, wherein the nomination system is independent from the visitation system”* in claim 1, “means for visiting a search result; and means for nominating a current search result from the list of search results, wherein the nominating means is independent of the visiting means in claim 11, “ a client system having a browser and a search engine plug-in, wherein the search engine plug-in allows group members to generate nomination data by nominating web pages, wherein the nomination data is generated independently of visitation data generated when a users visits a located web page” in claim 18, “refining the primary search result list based on nomination data collected from members of the group, wherein the nomination data is generated independently of visitation data generated when a users visits a located web page from a search result list” in claim 25. These features together with the other limitations of the independent claims are novel and non-obvious over the prior art of record. The dependent

claim 2-10, 12-17, 19-24, 26-30 being definite, enabled by the specifications, and further limiting to the independent claim, are also allowable.

The newly cited art [pub.date:Sept 2000] by, Mishra R.K. is directed to an integrated metasearch engine with classification, clustering, ranking of documents, more specifically, multi-engine search architecture receives user's query as a list of keywords, converts it into acceptable format pertaining to each of the search engines selected by the user and fires it in parallel, collecting search results from search engines [see Abstract, page 124, 3.3, fig 1].

The newly cited art [pub. Date: Jan 1998] by Karin Schmidt et al. is directed to a generic system for web-based group interaction, more specifically identifying three interdependent aspects such as: a) to support awareness of other users; b) to provide mechanisms for group building and group management; and c) to support different kinds of group interaction [see page 1, col 2, page 2, col 1, 2],

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance".

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Srirama Channavajjala whose telephone number is 571-272-4108. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM Eastern Time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dov Popvici, can be reached on 571-272-4083. The fax phone numbers for the organization where the application or proceeding is assigned is 703/872-9306

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free)

sc  
*Patent Examiner.*  
April 15, 2005

  
**SRIRAMA CHANNAVAJJALA**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**